



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 22 Porter Street

Case: HPC.ALT 2021.44

Applicant: Melissa Gomez, Great Sky Solar

Owner: Daniel Mikesh

Legal Ad: *Installation of Solar Panels*

HPC Meeting Date: Aug 17th, 2021



The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with a professional assessment of alteration proposals made for Local Historic District (LHD) properties. These assessments are based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and the associated Design Guidelines. A Staff Report is not a determination/decision and does not represent findings. A staff report does not constitute authorization in any form.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Subject Property: The locus is the c.1850 Victorian cottage known as the Emerson House. This property is site on the left side of Porter Street between Parker Place and Williams Court. A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Proposal: The following scope is under the purview of the HPC.

- Installation of solar panels on roof

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. The portions of the regulations that are applicable to the proposed alterations are discussed below.

B. Roof

The most relevant portion of the Design Guidelines is as follows:

Utility equipment, such as television antennae, air conditioners, solar collectors and other mechanical units should be restricted to the rear of the property or on portions of the roof that are not visible from a public way.

Due to the proposed elements being visible from the right of way, the HPC has purview over these features and the materials used.

Applicant Proposal: The Applicant proposes to install 30 solar panels on the left-side roof plane in front on the middle and rear roof segments.

The engineers at PZSE, Inc. must ensure limited shadows are cast over the panels as impacting one panel affects the entire system. This prohibits the option to locate panels on the right side of the gable roofs, where the shadows from neighboring structures would inhibit optimal function. The mounting system itself rises approximately 3” from the roof plane.

Preservation Planning Assessment:

The proposed solar panels will be visible from a public way. Staff advises the Commission that under M.G.L. Chapter 184 §23C, property owners shall not be unduly prevented or restricted from the installation or use of solar energy systems.

VI. FINDINGS & VOTE

When brining the matter to a vote the HPC must state their findings and reasons on why they take their position.

IV. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Preservation Planning recommends the following conditions be attached to any Certificate of Appropriateness that the HPC might grant for this project:

1. The Applicant/Owner shall file the Certificate with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) by uploading it to the CitizenServe permitting portal with their application for zoning compliance/building permit.
2. This Certificate is valid for one year. If work has not commenced within one year of the HPC's date of determination, this Certificate shall expire, and the Applicant shall re-apply for re-issuance of this Certificate. Provided that no changes have been made to the proposal, this shall be a Staff-level re-issuance of the Certificate.
3. Any changes to this proposal made prior to the commencement of work or in-the-field changes shall be submitted to Preservation Planning for their review to determine if the changes come under the purview of the HPC. Failure to seek approval for changes may delay final sign-offs/COs.
4. Additional utility meters shall be installed on the rear elevation of the building; they shall not be permitted on the front façade.
5. Conduits shall be located in the attic and any components that would be required to be visible (excluding solar panels) shall be painted to match the exterior façade of the house.
6. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at **historic@somervillema.gov** a minimum of 15 business days prior to final ISD walk-through so that Preservation Planning or their designee can confirm if the project was completed according to HPC approvals.